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RR RUEHIK  
DE RUEHAH #1506 3291016  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 251016Z NOV 09  
FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3799  
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE  
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5923  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3626  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3485  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 4165  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1266  
RHMCSUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 4118  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 001506

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SENV](#) [SOCI](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: BOUNDARIES OF PRESIDENTIAL  
ESTATE TO BE EXTENDED

¶1. (U) Sensitive but Unclassified. Not for Public  
Internet.

¶2. (SBU) According to a local environmental activist  
who works for the Kopetdag nature preserve, there is a  
government plan to make the entire Archabil nature  
site off-limits to the public. The Archabil nature  
site is on the southern edge of Ashgabat and extends  
into the mountains that border Iran. Currently, only  
the Archabil settlement, where one of President  
Berdimuhamedov's residences is located, is a  
restricted area. Under the new plan, the Archabil  
settlement, the adjacent Archabil Gorge, and the late  
President Niyazov's residence in southern Archabil  
(known as the Pink Palace) will be part of the new  
presidential estate. The expanded restricted area  
would be triple the size of current one.

¶3. (SBU) In the past, the Archabil settlement, with  
several sanatoriums and children's summer camps, and  
the Archabil Gorge, with many picnic and camping  
sites, were very popular among residents and guests  
of Ashgabat. Former President Niyazov closed the  
Archabil settlement to the public in the early  
nineties, when he made it the location of his summer  
residence. The planned expansion of the presidential  
estate will leave much less land for public  
recreation. The public will now have access only to  
the Health Walk, the cable car that goes up into the  
mountains to give a view of Ashgabat, Gok Dere  
(formerly Chuly) where the government has built a  
new camping site, and eastern parts of Ahal province.  
The source said that, according to President  
Berdimuhamedov's wish, gazelles from the Badhyz  
nature preserve, which is a strictly protected area  
in the southeastern part of the country about 450  
kilometers from Ashgabat, will be released in the  
presidential estate.

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT: The expansion of the strictly  
protected nature preserve area appears to have little

to do with protecting endangered animals or plants. Instead, it may have to do with security, providing a larger buffer area around Berdimuhamedov's estate, or just a presidential whim. In any case, the public will lose access to a popular place to escape the summer heat. END COMMENT.

CURRAN